

## EXHIBIT A



# Learn English



## English Grammar - Articles

General | A/an | The | No article

### Articles

There are only three articles in English: **a**, **an** and **the**.

There are two *types* of articles **indefinite a** and **an** or **definite the**.

Their proper use is complex especially when you get into the advanced use of English. Quite often you have to work by what sounds right, which can be frustrating for a learner.

We usually use no article to talk about things in general - the doesn't mean all.

For example: "Books are expensive." = (All books are expensive.)  
 "The books are expensive." = (Not all books are expensive, just the ones I'm talking about.)

### Indefinite articles - a and an (determiners)

A and an are the indefinite articles. They refer to something not specifically known to the person you are communicating with.

A and an are used before nouns that introduce something or someone you have not mentioned before:-

Adjectives	Adverbs	Articles	Cases	Clauses	Conditionals	Determiners	Gerund/Infinitive	Nouns	Participles	Preposition
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For "I saw **an** elephant this morning."

*example:* "I ate **a** banana for lunch."

A and an are also used when talking about your profession

*For* "I am **an** English teacher."

*example:* "I am **a** builder."

You use **a** when the noun you are referring to begins with a consonant (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y or z), for example, "a city" and "a factory"

You use **an** when the noun you are referring to begins with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u)

Pronunciation changes this rule.

If the next word begins with a *consonant sound* when we say it, for example,

**Note!** "university" then we use **a**. If the next word begins with a *vowel sound* when we say it, for example "hour" then we use **an**.

We say "university" with a "y" sound at the beginning as though it were spelt "youniversity".

So, "a university" IS correct.

We say "hour" with a silent h as though it were spelt "our".

So, "an hour" IS correct.

## Definite Article - the (determiners)



You use **the** when you know that the listener knows or can work out what particular person/thing you are talking about.

*For* "**The** apple you ate was rotten."

*example:* "Did you lock **the** car?"

You should also use **the** when you have already mentioned the thing you are talking about.

*For* "She's got two children; **a** girl and **a** boy. **The** girl's eight and **the** boy's fourteen."  
*example:*

We use the to talk about geographical points on the globe.

*For* **the** North Pole, **the** equator  
*example:*

We use the to talk about rivers, oceans and seas

*For* **the** Nile, **the** Pacific, **the** English channel  
*example:*

We also use the before certain nouns when we know there is only one of a particular thing.

*For* **the** rain, **the** sun, **the** wind, **the** world, **the** earth, **the** White House etc..  
*example:*

However if you want to describe a particular instance of these you should use a/an.

*For* "I could hear **the** wind." / "There's **a** cold wind blowing."  
*example:* "What are your plans for **the** future?" / "She has **a** promising future ahead of her."

The is also used to say that a particular person or thing being mentioned is the best, most famous, etc. In this use, 'the' is usually given strong pronunciation:

*For* "Harry's Bar is **the** place to go."  
*example:* "You don't mean you met **the** Tony Blair, do you?"

## No article

You do not use an article before nouns when talking in general terms.

*For* **Inflation** is rising.

*example:* **People** are worried about rising crime. (Note! People generally, so no article)

You do not use an article when talking about sports.

*For* My son plays **football**.

*example:* **Tennis** is expensive.

You do not use an article before uncountable nouns when talking about them generally.

*For* **Information** is important to any organisation.

*example:* **Coffee** is bad for you.

You do not use an article before the names of countries **except** where they indicate multiple areas or contain the words (state(s), kindom, republic, union). Kingdom, state, republic and union are nouns, so they need an article.

No article - Italy, Mexico, Bolivia, England

*For* Use the - **the UK** (United Kingdom), **the USA** (United States of America), **the Irish**

*example:* **Republic**

Multiple areas! **the Netherlands**, **the Philippines**, **the British Isles**

Want to know more about the use of articles? Read my [recommended grammar books](#) section.





September 1999  
Revised: April 2005



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## English Grammar Articles - Definite Article & Indefinite Article

### Try Our Article Exercises

### Definition of articles

English has two types of articles: definite (*the*) and indefinite (*a*, *an*). The use of these articles depends mainly on whether you are referring to any member of a group, or to a specific member of a group:

### 1. Indefinite Articles: a and an

*A* and *an* signal that the noun modified is indefinite, referring to *any* member of a group. These indefinite articles are used with singular nouns when the noun is general; the corresponding indefinite quantity word *some* is used for plural general nouns. The rule is:

- **a** + singular noun beginning with a consonant: **a boy**
- **an** + singular noun beginning with a vowel: **an elephant**
- **a** + singular noun beginning with a consonant sound: **a user** (sounds like 'yoo-zer,' i.e. begins with a consonant 'y' sound, so 'a' is used)
- **some** + plural noun: **some girls**

If the noun is modified by an adjective, the choice between *a* and *an* depends on the initial sound of the adjective that immediately follows the article:

- **a broken egg**
- **an unusual problem**
- **a European country** (sounds like 'yer-o-pi-an,' i.e. begins with consonant 'y' sound)

Note also that in English, the indefinite articles are used to indicate membership in a profession, nation, or religion.

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- I am a teacher.
- Brian is **an** Irishman.
- Seiko is **a** practicing Buddhist.

## 2. Definite Article: the

The definite article is used before singular and plural nouns when the noun is particular or specific. **The** signals that the noun is definite, that it refers to a *particular* member of a group. Compare the indefinite and definite articles in the following examples:

	Indefinite (a or an)	Definite (the)
Singular	a dog (any dog) <b>an</b> apple (any apple)	<b>the</b> dog (that specific dog) <b>the</b> apple (that specific apple)
Plural	some dogs (any dogs) <b>some</b> apples (any apples)	<b>the</b> dogs (those specific dogs) <b>the</b> apples (those specific apples)

**The** is not used with non countable nouns referring to something in a general sense:

[no article] Coffee is a popular drink.  
[no article] Japanese was his native language.  
[no article] Intelligence is difficult to quantify.

**The** is used with non countable nouns that are made more specific by a limiting modifying phrase or clause:

**The** coffee in my cup is too hot to drink.  
**The** Japanese he speaks is often heard in the countryside.

**The** intelligence of animals is variable but undeniable.

**The** is also used when a noun refers to something unique:

**the** White House  
**the** theory of relativity  
**the** 1999 federal budget

**Note: Geographical uses of the**

**Do not use the before:**

- names of countries (Italy, Mexico, Bolivia) **except** the Netherlands and the US
- names of cities, towns, or states (Seoul, Manitoba, Miami)
- names of streets (Washington Blvd., Main St.)
- names of lakes and bays (Lake Titicaca, Lake Erie) **except** with a group of lakes like the Great Lakes
- names of mountains (Mount Everest, Mount Fuji) **except** with ranges of mountains like the Andes or the Rockies or unusual names like the Matterhorn
- names of continents (Asia, Europe)
- names of islands (Easter Island, Maui, Key West) **except** with island chains like the Aleutians, the Hebrides, or the Canary Islands

**Do use the before:**

- names of rivers, oceans and seas (the Nile, the Pacific)
- points on the globe (the Equator, the North Pole)
- geographical areas (the Middle East, the West)
- deserts, forests, gulfs, and peninsulas (the Sahara, the Persian Gulf, the Black Forest, the Iberian Peninsula)

### Further Uses of Articles

In addition, use of *a*, *an*, and *the* also depends on whether the noun following the article possesses one of these paired qualities:

- Countable vs. non countable
- First vs. subsequent mention
- General vs. specific

**1. Countable vs. Non countable**

**A** and **an** are used if the noun can be counted.

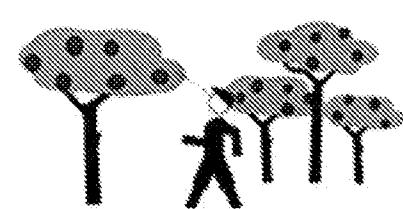
I stepped in a puddle.  
(How many puddles did you step in? Just one. Therefore, use **a**.)



I drank a glass of milk.  
(Glasses of milk can be counted)

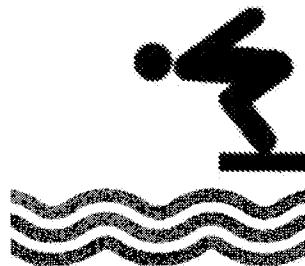


I saw an apple tree.  
(Apple trees can be counted)

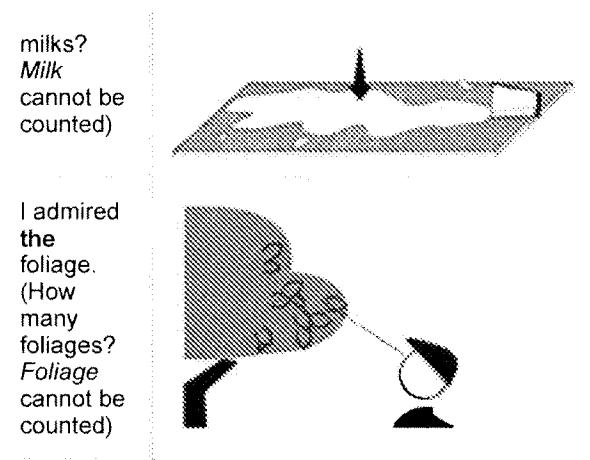


**The** must be used when the noun cannot be counted.

I dove into the water.  
(How many waters did you dive into? The question doesn't make any sense because water is non countable. Therefore, use **the**.)



I saw the milk spill.  
(How many



## 2. First vs. Subsequent Mention

**A** or **an** is used to introduce a noun when it is mentioned for the first time in a piece of writing. **The** is used afterward each time you mention that same noun.

**An** awards ceremony at the Kremlin would not normally have attracted so much attention. But when it was leaked that Soviet President Konstantin Chernenko would be presenting medals to three cosmonauts, interest in **the** ceremony intensified. *Time*, Sept. 17, 1984.

**Note:** **There is** and **there are** can be used to introduce an indefinite noun at the beginning of a paragraph or essay.

**There is** a robin in the tree outside my window. When my cat jumps up on the desk, **the** robin flies away.

## 3. General vs. Specific

**A**, **an**, and **the** can all be used to indicate that a noun refers to the whole class to which individual countable nouns belong. This use of articles is called *generic*, from the Latin word meaning "class."

**A** tiger is a dangerous animal. (any individual tiger)

**The** tiger is a dangerous animal. (all tigers: *tiger* as a generic category)

The difference between the indefinite **a** and **an** and the generic **a** and **an** is that the former means any one member of a class while the latter means all of the members of a class.

The omission of articles also expresses a generic (or general) meaning:

no article with a plural noun: **Tigers** are dangerous animals. (all tigers)

no article with a non countable noun:  
**Anger** is a destructive emotion. (any kind of anger)

### Omission of Articles

While some nouns combine with one article or the other based on whether they are countable or non countable, others simply never take either article. Some common types of nouns that don't take an article are:

#### 1. Names of languages and nationalities

- Chinese
- English
- Spanish
- Russian

#### 2. Names of sports

- volleyball
- hockey
- baseball

#### 3. Names of academic subjects

- mathematics
- biology
- history
- computer science

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After reviewing this handout, try some exercises:

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[Back to Grammar Table](#)

You are here: Learn English>English Lessons>Grammar Exercises>English Grammar Articles

## INDEFINITE ARTICLE

### A / AN

Use '**a**' with nouns starting with a **consonant** (*letters that are not vowels*),  
**'an'** with nouns starting with a **vowel** (*a,e,i,o,u*)

Examples:

**A** boy  
**An** apple  
**A** car  
**An** orange  
**A** house  
**An** opera

#### NOTE:

**An** before an *h* mute - **an** hour, **an** honour.

**A** before *u* and *eu* when they sound like 'you': **a** european, **a** university, **a** unit

#### The indefinite article is used:

- to refer to something for the first time:  
**An elephant** and **a mouse** fell in love.  
 Would you like **a drink**?  
 I've finally got **a good job**.
- to refer to a particular member of a group or class

Examples:

- with names of jobs:  
 John is **a doctor**.  
 Mary is training to be **an engineer**.  
 He wants to be **a dancer**.
- with nationalities and religions:  
 John is **an Englishman**.  
 Kate is **a Catholic**.
- with musical instruments:  
 Sherlock Holmes was playing **a violin** when the visitor arrived.  
 (**BUT** to describe the activity we say "He plays the violin.")

- **with names of days:**  
I was born on **a Thursday**

- **to refer to a kind of, or example of something:**  
the mouse had **a tiny nose**  
the elephant had **a long trunk**  
it was **a very strange car**
- **with singular nouns, after the words 'what' and 'such':**  
What a **shame!**  
She's such a **beautiful girl**.
- **meaning 'one', referring to a single object or person:**  
I'd like **an orange** and two lemons please.  
The burglar took **a diamond necklace** and **a valuable painting**.

Notice also that we usually say **a hundred**, **a thousand**, **a million**.

**NOTE:** that we use '**one**' to add emphasis or to contrast with other numbers:  
I don't know **one person** who likes eating elephant meat.  
We've got **six computers** but only **one printer**.

 previous

next 



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